

Indiana High Speed Rail Association

September 18, 2007

Board of Directors
Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority
Crown Point, Indiana 46307

The Indiana High Speed Rail Association respectfully asks the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority for \$125,000 to study the economic impact of a high-speed rail system from Valparaiso, Indiana to the Gary/Chicago International Airport to Chicago.

This study, through our consultant of choice, Transportation Economics & Management Systems, Inc. of Frederick, Maryland, would provide for the data and information that would determine the economic viability of implementing this transportation system. The study would also show the projected return on government and private investments afforded to the transportation system.

As proposed, the Gary/Chicago International Airport is included in a 3000-mile network of high-speed passenger trains across nine Midwestern states. **When built, it would then become the second largest multimodal transportation hub of the Midwest Regional Rail System, outside of Chicago.** This hub would include stops from such destinations as Chicago, Fort Wayne, Michigan City, Valparaiso and Indianapolis.

Valparaiso is included because 1. It is on the RailAmerica freight rail right of way that comes from Fort Wayne and currently passes north of the Gary/Chicago International Airport. That alignment is also the choice of the Midwest Regional Rail System in Indiana, and would then be utilized when building the new transportation hub at the airport. 2. Because, at this time, the high-speed passenger train would need, by law, to include another city station stop east or south of the airport. Valparaiso, Indiana meets that criterion and the criteria of the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority.

The economic assessment would further look at the critical south of the lake routes currently being used by both freight and passenger rail services to make it the busiest intersection of trains in the United States. The assessment would include cost factors about clearing the congestion for passenger rail purposes, and possibly making a recommendation for an alternative route.

In conclusion, having high-speed passenger trains connect with Chicago and other communities makes the Gary/Chicago International Airport all that more attractive to passengers coming from Illinois and close-in Indiana communities. Knowing the economic benefits from that connection would measurably add to the airport's popularity. Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,



W. Dennis Hodges
Vice President, Marketing and Membership

2645 Ridge Road
Voice: (219) 887-1351

Highland, Indiana 46322-1663
Fax: (219) 887-5950

Email: wdh.2016@att.net